

Dear members of the Connecticut Education Committee,

My name is Megan Scharrer. I am in support of H.B. 6663 An Act Establishing the English Learners Bill of Rights. I am a Community Organizer for Make the Road Connecticut and a resident of West Hartford.

I have worked with a community of Spanish speaking parents for the past year trying to improve and increase Hartford Public School resources for parents who do not speak english and ensuring a quality education for children. I have seen and heard about the many injustices parents have faced because Connecticut schools are not providing sufficient resources for immigrant families. Children are blamed for failing grades because of being distracted in their classes, but in reality it's because they are still learning English and cannot understand the teacher. Parents are being given interpreters that are not qualified to provide interpretation services; they do not make eye contact, they do not share everything the parent or staff member says, and sometimes they misinterpret what the parent says and a DCF case ends up being opened. Parents have no idea what is happening in their child's education and children do not have sufficient resources to support services in their schools to help improve grades. Parents are at a point where they no longer feel like they can advocate to improve their child's education because of Connecticut Public Schools failures.

Connecticut Public Schools need to do better for immigrant families. Parents and students deserve a high quality education, with access to all support services, and interpretation and translation services regardless of immigration status or language they speak. It is unjust and unfair that ELL students and parents are suffering because Connecticut Public Schools have not taken time to support its community. The time for change is now.

I am proudly part of the ELL Student and Parents Success Coalition, a coalition that fights to improve Connecticut schools for ELL students and ensure that parents that do not speak English have a voice in their children's education. I want to ask the committee to implement H.B. 6663 this legislative session.

Sincerely,

Megan Scharrer